

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 DPW-01 ORM-02 /085 W

-----031045Z 106926 /21

R 030942Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1743

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9557

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VN

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN PRISONERS IN NORTHERN VIET-NAM

1. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE FALL OF VIET-NAM IN 1975, REFUGEES AND OTHERS HAVE REPORTED A NUMBER OF INSTANCES OF HIGH RANKING ARVN BEING TAKEN TO THE NORTH FOR IMPRISONMENT "RE-EDUCATION". THERE HAVE BEEN FEWER REPORTS OF IMPORTANT GVN CIVIL SERVANTS HAVING HAD TO TAKE THE SAME ROUTE. WE HAVE NEVER HEARD OF A SINGLE CASE OF ANY OF THOSE TAKEN NORTH BEING PERMITTED TO RETURN TO THE SOUTH; AT MOST, THEY HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO WRITE AN OCCASIONAL LETTER TO THEIR FAMILIES.

2. AN AMERICAN WITH CONSIDERABLE CONTACT WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND AND SINGAPORE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE LATTER, WHERE HE ENCOUNTERED A REFUGEE WHOSE FATHER HAD BEEN AN ARVN COLONEL. SHE REPORTED THAT HE HAD BEEN KEPT IN THE SOUTH, APPARENTLY IN A RE-EDUCATION CAMP, UNTIL DECEMBER, 1976, AT WHICH POINT HE AND ANOTHER COLONEL THE SOURCE KNOWS WERE TAKEN WITH OTHERS TO THE NORTH. IN LETTERS THE TWO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WRITE TO THEIR FAMILIES, CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY HAVE INDICATED IN CAREFULLY WORKED OUT CASE THAT THEY WERE TAKEN TO THE NORTH HAD THEIR HEADS SHAVED THEN WERE PARADED AROUND VILLAGES WITH SIGNS AROUND THEIR NECKS CALLING ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THEY WERE TRAITORS. VILLAGERS THREW STONES AT THEM. IN THE LATEST LETTER, THEY REPORTED BEING MOVED TO ANOTHER LOCATION IN THE NORTH. WHERE THEY WERE NOW WORKING IN MINES.

3. ONE RECENT, WELL-EDUCATED REFUGEE FROM SAIGON NOTED THAT STORIES OF "COLONELS AND UP" HAVING BEEN TAKEN TO THE NORTH DURING 1976 AND BEING PARADED AROUND AND STONED, HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING WIDELY IN THAT CITY OF LATE.

4. ASSUMING THESE ACCOUNTS ARE ACCURATE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW MANY PEOPLE THEY CONCERN. MANY CIVILIAN OFFICIALS AND MID-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS REMAIN IN CAMPS IN THE SOUTH AND MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED. ONE REFUGEE NOTED APR 29 THAT HIS FATHER, AN INSPECTOR IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN SAIGON, WAS IN RE-EDUCATION FOR ONLY TWO WEEKS IN MID-1975, AFTER WHICH HE WAS RELEASED HAVING BEEN JUDGED TO BE UNCORRUPTED. THE FATHER HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DISILLUSIONED WITH THE NEW REGIME SINCE THEN AND IS CURRENTLY PLANNING TO ESCAPE, ACCORDING TO HIS SON.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO09557
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770154-0584
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705101/aaaadjoa.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 56d35087-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2323479
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTHERN PRISONERS IN NORTHERN VIET-NAM
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, VN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/56d35087-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009